

# FOCUS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

## Camrose Family Violence Action Society

A new group has been formed in Camrose to address family violence issues. The Family Violence Action Society is a community-based initiative to deal with family violence issues. Wendy Gregorwich, Director of Camrose and District Support Services (CDSS), says "the Society is an attempt to develop a community-based initiative to deal with family violence issues."

The Family Violence Action Society will direct their activities in the following areas: support education and awareness activities; support treatment programs; gather information on family violence in the Camrose area; and advocate for safe and secure families.

The first item of business for the Society is to encourage members of the community to get involved in the Society and its activities. Gregorwich says "I'd like to see us look at family violence as much of a crime as we do with drinking and driving. With this kind of group working at the grass roots, day to day, talking to their neighbours and that kind of thing, we are going to make a difference."

If you are interested in working with the Society or would like more information, please contact Frieda Ness at 672-2090.

## Communities working together to prevent family violence

Across the province, Albertans are charting a new direction to create a new, community-based system for helping children and families. This new system focuses on providing services which are culturally sensitive and are provided within the community to meet the needs of local children and families. Early Intervention Programs, which are part of this initiative, bring together supports and resources from the community to help children and families before a crisis occurs.

Early Intervention Programs play an important role in preventing family violence by working with "high-risk" children and families before the situation becomes

*continued on page 2...*



### In this issue:

Communities working to prevent family violence .....	2
Azimuth brings life to the stage .....	2
Resource Review .....	3
Did you know? .....	3
Community News .....	4
Where do you go when you can't go home? .....	4
Juvenile prostitution task force .....	5
Camrose Family Violence Action Society .....	5
E Words to Empower Youth .....	6

violent. These programs build a support network within the community to give families the resources and programs they need to build healthy family relationships.

To date, a total of 100 programs have been approved for a total of \$14.3 million in funding over the next three years. The following programs deal specifically with the issue of family violence:

**WINGS of Providence Society** will assist children in Edmonton who come from violent homes to build self-esteem, group interaction and social skills.

**Golden Hills Family/Community Resource Worker Program** will address school issues, drug and alcohol intervention, support groups for children of divorce, violence prevention programs and parenting and discipline assistance in the communities of Three Hills, Drumheller Valley and Wheatland.

**Community Support Worker at John Wilson Elementary School** will address issues such as emotional abuse, attention deficit disorder and educational problems for children with special needs in the town of Innisfail.

**Parenting for the Future** is a program that works with children and their families in the County of Parkland who have experienced family violence to take steps to reduce the risk of future violence.

**Discovery House** in Calgary has developed a six-month program to help children and families who have experienced or are experiencing family violence in their home.



If you would like more information on Early Intervention programs, please call 310-0000 and ask for your Regional Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families.

## **Azimuth brings life to the stage**

Azimuth Theatre is once again bringing real life situations to the stage in their new production "Back Pocket Lennie". This play chronicles the generational cycle of abuse within the lives of three women.

"Back Pocket Lennie", written by Sandy Paddick, has toured throughout Alberta and Canada. Paddick says that it doesn't matter if the community is more or less affluent, the audiences have the same reaction.

Jan Streader, a member of the three-women cast, recalls a show in Kindersley, Saskatchewan, when two 70-year old women talked to the cast after the show and said "I've had nine children and I realize I've been an abusive mother" said one. "I can see behaviour coming out in my daughter with her kid that I started. My God, I taught her that," said the other. A panel is also on hand to discuss issues with the audience.

Azimuth Theatre initially started as a venture by the Sherwood Park RCMP and has quickly used its creative talents to bring awareness to family violence issues. Azimuth Theatre has produced many plays about family violence such as "Under Broken Wings" and "The Dungeonmaster's Handbook".

# Juvenile prostitution task force established

A task force has been established to examine options and provide the government with recommendations on how to take action on juvenile prostitution in Alberta.

"The Juvenile Prostitution Task Force will work with the community in looking for solutions," said Heather Forsyth, Chairperson for the Task Force. "Several municipalities and organizations have already gathered valuable information on juvenile prostitution within the province. The task force will meet with these individuals and groups to examine the work done and recommendations already made. They will also research and examine successful programs from other jurisdictions."

The task force will look at the available options under provincial jurisdiction to discourage pimps and johns from soliciting and exploiting young girls. The task force will look at amending the Child Welfare Act to be able to charge johns with child abuse if

they accept the services of an underage prostitute. It would also give police more power to take underage prostitutes into custody.

Community organizations throughout the province are already working to help juvenile prostitutes. Street Teams in Calgary has 287 active files on child prostitutes working on the streets. "And those are just the ones we have weekly contact with," said Ross MacInnes, the former vice cop who founded Street Teams.

The Crossroads Outreach Program in Edmonton works to keep street youth safe, build relationships of trust and help youth get off the streets when they are ready. "Prostitution is not a healthy lifestyle choice and youth who are involved in prostitution are sexually exploited. We want to reach as many young people on the streets as we can," said DeWayne Brown, Director of Crossroads.

## Violence and youth

By Diane Kinnon and Louise Hanvey  
Reprinted from "Vis-A-Vis" Volume 13, Number 2

The effects of violence are just beginning to be identified and there are some alarming trends. Violence has serious effects on the short and long-term health of young people, on their development and on their ability to reach their potential.

Many young people are the victims and witnesses of long-term sexual, physical, emotional and/or psychological abuse. Often they are attacked by someone they know, in a familiar environment such as the home, school or neighbourhood.

Experiences of sexual, physical, or psychological violence can have devastating effects on self-esteem, which can, in turn, have many other effects such as: poor health, lower school grades, dropping out of school, difficulties in finding and keeping a job and difficulty in forming and maintaining violence-free relationships.

Increasingly, both boys and girls are perpetrators of violence against other youth and adults. Teachers and youth workers say violence, often with a weapon, is being used as the first means of solving disputes among younger and younger children.

The prevention of violence is essential to the health and well-being of young people. Violence cannot be addressed in isolation from other concerns of youth. We must involve them in the design and delivery of programs and services and we must listen to young people as they express their concerns and hopes.

### Violence and Youth

- The Edmonton Public School Board polled 1,431 students on security in senior high schools. 91 percent felt safe in their school. 9 percent didn't.
- 89 percent felt safe in their communities. 11 percent did not.
- Almost 25 percent of the 250 offenders arrested for gun related crimes in Edmonton in 1994 were under 18.
- Average age of first violent experience is 15.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### South Region

The pilot run of the "Strategies for Working with Wife Abuse in Families Workshop was held in **Coaldale** on May 27 & 28. For more information, please contact the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence at 422-5916.

### Northwest

**The Northwest Regional Family Violence Prevention Working Group** will be giving a presentation to the Co-Chairs of the Commissioner's Steering Committees for Regions 13, 14, 15 and 17 to foster an understanding of the dynamics and impact of family violence.

**The Renaissance Program** is offering alternatives to men who abuse their partners. This 16 week program will be held on November 10. For more information, please contact the John Howard Society of Grande Prairie at 532-0373.

### Northeast

**Hope Haven** in Lac La Biche has expanded to a larger rural family violence prevention centre. It now has two additional rooms.

**Unity House** in Fort McMurray has joined with the Fort McMurray Sexual Assault Centre.

### Calgary

**The Brenda Stafford Foundation and Calhome Properties** announced the creation of the "Brenda Stafford Centre for the Prevention of Domestic Violence".

24 units of housing will be provided to women and children experiencing family violence. This Centre represents another step forward in preventing family violence by combining the knowledge and efforts of many agencies.

### Edmonton

**The Edmonton Council Against Family Violence (ECAFV)** has hired a new coordinator, Pat Vargas to coordinate and facilitate the activities of Edmonton family violence prevention agencies and organizations. She will be coordinating various projects for ECAFV, such as the Family Violence Information Line and the Principles of Practice Inservice. If you would like more information, call 496-5886.

**The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter Society in Hinton** has received funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to enhance the shelter and make it wheelchair accessible.

**The Lurana Shelter** has initiated a project to help teenagers deal with abuse in dating relationships. The shelter is collaborating with students and teachers from St. Joseph's High School in Edmonton and Bellerose High School in St. Albert to produce a 15 minute video on healthy and unhealthy relationships. "**Love Hurts? It Shouldn't!**" will be ready for distribution in the fall. For more information, please contact Rhonda Breitkreuz at 422-7263.

### Where do you go when you can't go home?



A shelter for teens in Edmonton is providing a safe alternative to life on the streets. The kids who seek refuge at The Youth Emergency Shelter Society (YESS), some as young as twelve, have very adult problems such as physical, sexual or psychological abuse or problems with drugs and alcohol. YESS provides a safe shelter for kids leaving troubled or abusive homes who otherwise may end up on the streets.

The Youth Emergency Shelter helps these kids get their lives on track by providing them with shelter, clothing, food and most importantly, help and advice. Of the 51 youth who use the shelter each month, approximately 60% are boys and 40% are girls. Most kids stay an average of ten days, sometimes returning to their families, others entering a program called Start House. Start House works with youth who will most likely never return home and teaches them life skills to help them make it on their own.

The Youth Emergency Shelter is the first of its kind in Western Canada and has helped over 8,500 youths and families since it was established in 1981.

# E Words To Help Empower Youth

By Evelyn Petersen Knight-Ridder Newspapers

This column is an excerpt from the keynote address of the last annual conference of the Michigan Network of Runaway and Youth Services. This keynote address was presented by Greg T., 17.

"We need to empower youth. I've heard that expression over and over again, and I hate to burst your bubble, but you can't empower me or any other kid. Instead here are some other really good E words that you can use on us.

## *Encourage*

Show me and tell me that you believe in me.

## *Envision*

Help me to see all of the possibilities.

## *Excite*

I really do want to feel positive about my future.

## *Elevate*

Help me to help myself rise above adversities.

## *Example*

If I do it wrong, show me; I want to learn.

## *Endure*

Help me to remember that things take time.

## *Enable*

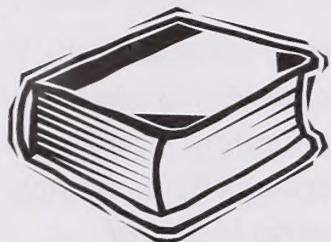
Just give me a chance to try.

## *Enrich*

If I help to improve another's life, it will enrich my own.

Empowerment is not something you can give me; it is something I must achieve. I know this must be true because I see an awful lot of adults in this world around me everyday who are not empowered. Maybe if they had experienced some of these E words in their lives, they might feel empowered today... Our future lies in the hands of teens. When I think about my hands I feel good about them. I have strong hands; I have capable hands. I believe in my hands; do you?"

## RESOURCE REVIEW



**Student Assistance for Everyone (SAFE)** - The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) has produced a manual to promote healthy behaviour and lifestyle choices for junior and high school students. The cost of the SAFE manual is \$20. For more information, contact AADAC at (403) 427-7319. To be connected toll-free, dial 310-0000.

**The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence** has released a series of new publications related to the prevention, intervention and treatment of family violence, including the prevention of youth violence. For more information or to order materials, please contact: **National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health Canada, 1st Floor Finance Building Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B4** Phone: **1-800-267-1291** TDD Toll-free: **1-800-561-5643**.

**"When Teenage Boys/Girls Have Been Sexually Abused"** are two booklets prepared by the Vancouver-Richmond Incest and Sexual Abuse Centre (VISAC) of Family Services of Greater Vancouver are written for teenagers who have been abused. Alberta's Office for the Prevention of Family Violence also has materials designed for youth. For more information contact the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

**"Overcoming Violence in the Family: A Program for High Risk Youth"** - The John Howard Society of Ottawa is producing and testing training materials to assist professionals and parents in helping adolescents who have been exposed to family violence. Focused on youth who exhibit delinquent behaviour or are likely to come into conflict with the law, this project is the second phase of a Health Canada-funded project aimed at minimizing the effects of exposure to violence and abuse.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### → National newsletter for child witness programs

The London, Ontario Family Court Clinic has been granted funding to launch a national newsletter targeted to Child Witness Programs across Canada. The Clinic has programs for child victims of sexual abuse who testify in court.

### → "Violence: you can make a difference"

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters has launched their 1996 campaign: "Violence: You Can Make a Difference". Hundreds of private broadcasters are working with the government, other partners and the public in a united front against violence. The 1996 campaign involves hundreds of radio and television stations across the country which donate over \$10.6 million in air time.

### → Youth in care

The National Youth in Care Network has received funding for a project entitled "Back Into the Hands of Youth: Youth in and from Care Identify Healing Needs." Over 100 youth were involved in developing community-based, peer-led strategies that will help youth heal from abuse.



**FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

FOCUS is published quarterly by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions, especially news about events and activities in your community.

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